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Motivating the Unmotivated: How Are We Supporting Struggling Readers in Upper Elementary Classrooms?

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**Motivating the Unmotivated:
How Are We Supporting Struggling Readers in Upper Elementary Classrooms?**

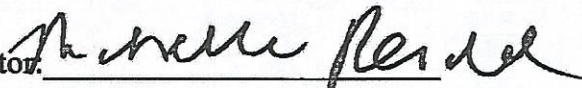
An Honors Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Honors in the
Department of Elementary and Special Education, College of Education

By
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Under the mentorship of Dr. Michelle Reidel

ABSTRACT

Motivating struggling students to read is a question considered by many general education reading teachers and special education teachers alike. Since student classroom experiences today differ greatly from classrooms of the past in terms of instructional practices and learning supports, scripted materials that seldom cater to student interest have often been promoted due to the pressure of standardized assessment. With little to no student engagement present in the classroom, it is up to the student to find the will to read or to the teacher to utilize alternative strategies in increasing student motivation (Cambria & Gunthrie, 2008). However, there is no one specific way in which to achieve this goal, and general education and special education teachers may differ in their methods used to motivate students. Therefore, through the use of focus group interview and observation data, eight fourth grade general education and special education teachers at an elementary school in southeast Georgia will discuss the techniques they use in their classrooms to motivate students. Using this data, the researcher will then determine if the strategies used are similar or differ across general education and special education classrooms. Moreover, the researcher will determine if the methods used by these teachers to motivate students are recommended by research. Not only will this study identify strategies that help motivate struggling readers in general education and special education classrooms, but a dialogue will also be opened up between the two groups to facilitate the exchange of resources and to bridge the gap between methodologies.

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Introduction

In today's classrooms, reading and writing are the two most heavily tested and weighted subjects. In the state of Georgia, the Georgia Milestones EOG (End of Grade) Standardized tests that elementary school students begin taking in the third grade, weights English/Language Arts into 2 separate areas. The first area is reading and vocabulary, which comprises 53% of the test, and the other area is Writing and Language, which comprises the other 47% of the test (Georgia Department of Education). From the 2016-2017 school year, out of all Georgia third graders who took the Georgia Milestone EOG Test in English Language Arts, only 26% of students scored in the Proficient Learner range, and only 10.1% scored in the Distinguished Learner range (Georgia Department of Education). This means that 73% of third graders weren't proficient in grade level literacy skills as guided by the Georgia Standard of Excellence. This is especially important because 74% of third graders who struggle with reading had difficulties in reading by the time they reached the ninth grade (Fletcher and Lyon, 1998).

Literature Review

There are many causes for students' struggle with reading, but the focus of this study is motivation. Motivation in school is defined by Kamil, Borman, Dole, Kral, Salinger, and Torgensen (2008) as to whether students possess the "desire, reason, and predisposition to become involved by a task or activity (Kamil et. al, 26)." There are two types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation refers to behavior that is driven by internal rewards, and extrinsic motivation is behavior driven by external rewards, whether that is tangible (money, gifts) or not (such as praise). My hypothesis is

that students who are struggling readers need constant motivation in order to develop and experience growth in their reading skills. The goal of my capstone was to discover successful strategies and methodologies that teachers are using to encourage and build struggling reader's skills. I also wanted to know if teachers are using the recommended strategies in research for helping struggling reader, and if they aren't, why? Is there a way to bridge the gap between research and implementation? I also wanted to know what Special Education teachers are using to motivate their students with disabilities who experience complications with reading. Therefore, I sought teachers who teach in grades Pre-Kindergarten through Fifth Grade, and teachers who teach in General Education, as well as Special Education to gain insights on motivation and reading. The hypothesis for this project is that Motivation is the main key for students to develop successful reading skills.

Motivating struggling readers in general education classrooms means that students have to find the will to read (Cambria, Gunthrie, 2008). Many teachers use types of extrinsic motivational techniques such as putting stickers on a chart, providing prizes for reading a goal amount of books, or giving out star reader certificates in order to try to engage students into reading. Intrinsic motivation can be complements, or just a pat on the back that will incite confidence in the student. The goal is to "close the gap" between students who have not yet acquired efficient reading skills and their classroom peers (Torgenson, 2004). Some skills required for developing successful readers are: phonemic awareness, phonics, word recognition, vocabulary, and simple comprehension. Phonemic awareness is listening, hearing, and identifying the smallest units of sound in words. Phonics is the teaching and correlating of letter sounds to their appropriate alphabetical

letter. The ability to see words, and automatically recall them is a skill called word recognition. An example of building word recognition is site words in lower elementary school grades. Simple comprehension is the very basic of understanding what the words being read together means (Cambria & Gunthrie, 2008). At the very basis of the concept of reading, students need motivation to understand the material and have interest in the task (Torgenson, 2004). When children are motivated to read, have the will, and are reading something that is interesting to them, they will engage in the material, and build better skills. There is a high need and demand for techniques and methods for improving struggling readers' practices in classrooms.

There are many well-researched teaching methods for helping struggling readers develop their skill in general education classrooms. One key to success is forming "purposeful, authentic reading programs" (Padak, Potenza-Radis, 2010). What and how students read must be connected to the students' interests. This could be a connection through culture, environment, or something that the students want to know and learn about. Padak and Potenza-Radis (2010) state that, "Authentic reading leads to purposeful, engaged reading. Engaged reading yields improved reading (2)." When students are engaged and interested in what they are reading, they begin to explore and read more. By reading more, the skills required for reading improve and students begin gaining confidence in their ability to read. Using authentic texts and other reading materials to help create high levels of engagement in students. Teachers should also focus on motivation for and interest in each student and provide for appropriate support when

needed. Parents should also be involved in order to create time for meaningful reading time while at home, and they also know the child's interests.

Padak and Potenza-Radis (2010) also recommend time for independent reading in classrooms. In 93 percent of reading comprehension tests comparisons, children who read in class or who read more in class performed as well or better than counterparts who did not read (or did not read as much) (Krashen, 2004). Many students who struggle with reading allow for reading time to just happen rather than taking initiative to begin reading and engaging in the activity thoughtfully. Replacing daily activities for reading time was just as effective, if not more effective as traditional instruction in enhancing reading comprehension (Allington, 2001). This is under the potential of self-teaching, and learning without formal instruction. Vocabulary knowledge is the biggest outcome of independent reading, however, there is evidence that many other reading skills, such as phonemic awareness, phonics, and comprehension is further developed through independent reading and writing (Allington, 2002).

Supporting students who struggle with reading is very important, but teachers cannot be intrusive or cause a dependence to form. Teachers should talk one-on-one with their students to find their interests. Conversations that are independent from interests are useful in understanding what the child has been reading. Help children who struggle to select books that are appropriate in terms of content and difficulty level. Listening centers, tutors, buddy reading, or other forms of scaffolding are great tools to allow the children to both learn and engage with other peers, and learn from the experience. Small

instructional settings are preferred for students who struggle with reading rather than whole group instruction (McLaughlin & Rasinski, 2015). Mental activities and processes can also be taught to students in order to increase their comprehension and reading fluency (Torgenson, 2004). Torgenson (2004) recommends a teaching a three step process to students. These three steps are: Monitoring, Increasing, and Repairing (Torgenson, 2004). Monitoring is when students ask themselves, “Does what I am reading make sense?”. Increasing involves building comprehension skills by adjusting reading rates to go slower through tougher words or paragraphs, and summarizing reading in the student’s own words. Repairing is the process of re-reading, looking up unfamiliar words, and asking questions to further understand and engage in the text.

Many of these same concepts can be used to motivate and teach children who struggle with reading in special education classrooms, or struggle with learning disabilities. Students with Specific Learning Disabilities often struggle with basic concepts of reading (i.e. Dyslexia), oral language, and writing (Fields, 2014). Students who are diagnosed with Intellectual Disabilities, depending on the severity, may not be able to grasp concepts of reading or communication at all (Fields, 2014). When it comes to students who struggle with any type of learning disability, the biggest factor that affects school work is internal frustration. Students with learning disabilities are continuously frustrated with their performance on school work. They do not want to read aloud or participate in activities that reveal their academic deficits because of negative peer reactions (Weiser, 2014). One of the greatest motivators is giving students with learning disabilities a choice of what they are going to do, whether it is in reading,

writing, math, or any other content areas (Morgan, 2006; Stenholz, Davey, & Kraft, 2008). This makes the concepts more relevant to the context of learning, and helps fight some of the disinterest that forms when students with disabilities cannot relate to the content of the coursework because it does not correlate with the lives they lead.

Differentiation is also a method that motivates students with disabilities because combining differentiated instruction and assignments with student choice empowers students with learning disabilities to take over their own learning, and builds engagement in the classroom (Levy, 2008). For students with emotional and behavioral disorders, correct responses increased and disruptive behavior decreased when they had the skills and knowledge to succeed in a task (Gunter & Reed, 1997).

The classroom that today's students' classroom experiences differ greatly from the classrooms of the past in terms of instructional practices and learning supports. The pressure of standardized tests weighs heavily on teachers' shoulders, because the scores can be used to evaluate teacher performance, so the pressure for student success is high. Due to standardized tests, teachers must follow a strict curriculum determined by the State of Georgia. The current curriculum that is in place in Georgia is the Georgia Standards of Excellence (Georgia Department of Education, 2017). This curriculum leads to the Georgia Milestones testing for grades 3 through grade 12. Some of the required materials for teaching involved scripted materials, which does not leave much room for catering to student interest. It's hard to engage students when they may not be interested in the required reading (Hidi, 2001).

For support of students, teachers can take advantage of opportunities before, during, and after lessons (Margolis & McCabe, 2006). Before the lesson, teachers can prepare readers and confirm what they already know by reading. During the lesson, teachers can provide guidance and support for student success. After the lesson, teachers solidify what the students have learned, prepare them for the next lesson, and give them additional opportunities to connect new words to known concepts. Timing is also an important aspect when trying to develop skill sets in students. The key is how to avoid spending too much time developing adequate background reading skills that little time is left for instruction (Allington, 2002). Teachers should generally select big, generative ideas that will “help learners understand what goes on in the world and how things occur the way they do, and how, and why they will probably happen again (Ellis, Farmer, and Newnan, 2005).” For example, this concept could include science topics such as how lightning and thunder form in the sky, or why the sky is blue. Multiple concepts throughout content areas could be covered by selecting these big ideas and using it to follow curriculum and encourage students’ skill building. When it comes to scheduling, eliminate less important activities, and plan scheduled activities focused on the goal trying to be achieved. Teachers may also organize class materials, handout photocopies of homework assignments, and place all materials needed for lesson in desks before class (Margolis & McCabe, 2006). Finally, the most important tactic for teachers is to maintain enthusiasm. Teacher attitude toward reading and instruction has an impact on how students respond to instruction in terms of attitude, enthusiasm, and attention (Bettencourt, Gillet, Gall, and Hull, 1983). Students appear to respond by demonstrating higher levels on on-task behavior and attention, as well as higher levels of achievement if

the teacher is engaged and enthusiastic about what is being taught (Bettencourt, Gillet, Gall, and Hull, 1983).

Research Questions

The research presented shows that student interest and engagement is critically important to assist struggling readers in the classroom. As a dual-certification Elementary Education and Special Education major, I am interested in what techniques that teachers are currently using in both general education and special education classrooms. First of all, I wanted to know: Are teachers using strategies that are recommended by research to help students who are struggling with reading? I plan to look at both general education teachers, as well as special education teachers, and observe what techniques and strategies they are using in their individual classrooms. I am interested in seeing if there is any overlap in the techniques used by general and special education teachers, and where the overlap is in the instruction of elementary school students who struggle with reading. Lastly, my main focus was on how teachers motivate students who struggle in reading. I believe that motivation is key to helping struggling readers in classrooms and want to see how teachers motivate students.

Methodology

Merriam-Webster defines a case study as “an intensive analysis of an individual unit (such as a person or community) stressing developmental factors in relation to environment (Merriam-Webster, 2018).” Furthermore, a case study is additionally defined as a type of investigation that “involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system (i.e., a setting, a context),” (Creswell, 1997).

These two definitions share a connection because they both emphasize that, in order for the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the case, relevant factors in a case study must be examined in extreme detail. Case studies have a reputation that is improving as they are being used as an effective method for conducting research on real-life topics, leading to a positive response and increasing popularity among researchers. However, some researchers question whether a case study is a method of research or whether it is methodology. Yin (2014) refers to a case study as an empirical research method with emphasis on specific procedures. Case studies are additionally described by researchers as an investigative process used to study a specific phenomenon in a real-life setting. For this specific case study, both perspectives will be utilized.

The main goal of the case study research method is for the researcher to use one detailed case to provide an illustration and explanation to explore a specific phenomenon or issue. In this method, researchers use qualitative inquiry to explore a case or cases over time in order to collect detailed, in-depth data. The qualitative data collected comes from multiple sources of information, such as observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports (Creswell, 1997). Additionally, quantitative data can be used in case studies. Examples of quantitative data that can be used in case studies are test scores and numerical rankings. Each source of information collected in a case study is considered one singular unit of analysis (Yin, 2014). The depth and variety of data collected in a case study is a primary reason for the preference for use of a case study in this specific research.

The qualitative research design of a case study enables researchers to reach a deeper, holistic understanding of the case through its extensive data collection. The

detailed descriptions of the case help the researcher to identify common themes throughout the data. This data is then analyzed to determine what it signifies for the issue as a whole (Stake, 1995). There are three types of case studies that can be used: the instrumental case study, the collective case study, and the intrinsic case study. The primary focus of this paper is the intrinsic single-case study, in which the focus of research is on the case itself because the case presents an unusual or unique situation which can be analyzed (Creswell, 1997). The real-life, unique case in this particular study is an inquiry into the methods that general education and special education teachers at one elementary school use to motivate struggling readers, and how these methods differ between the general education and the special education classroom setting.

Although the case study method was originally developed through research in anthropology and psychology (Creswell, 1997; Harrison et. al, 2017), case studies are especially beneficial when conducting research in the educational field because there are multitudes of data sets that researchers can utilize. These data sets can be behavioral records, test records, observations, interviews, and focus groups. The approach is commonly used in examining programs, individuals, groups, and social situations. Case studies are versatile and pragmatic (Harrison et. al, 2017), and allows the researcher to investigate the experiences of individuals in the case through a lens that quantitative data cannot provide. These are vital characteristics for research that is conducted in a public elementary school setting. There are challenges to conducting a case study, but overall, the case study method is an effective way of conducting research in social settings, such as public elementary schools.

Design of Case Study

The state of Georgia mandates a set of standardized tests for elementary school students known as the Georgia Milestones for the 2016-2017 school years, only 26% of third-grade students who took the Georgia Milestones EOG test in English/Language Arts scored in the Proficient Learner range, and only 10.1% scored in the Distinguished Learner Stage (Georgia DOE). The ultimate results were that 73% of third graders were not proficient in grade level skills as outlined in the Georgia Standards of Excellence. These statistics could suggest that a difference in instructional techniques and the way that students learn how to read, and enjoy reading makes a difference, because for the most part, students who are motivated to read perform well on the tests. For this reason, the researcher conducted a single-case case study.

The purpose of this research was to investigate what methods are being used to motivate elementary school students who struggle in reading by teachers in both general education and special education classroom settings. Additionally, the researcher discovered if there are any similarities or differences between the methods that general education and special education teachers utilize. This case study also falls under the “embedded design” category of case study research, considered by Yin to be a case study which includes multiple units of analysis. An embedded design would best fit this research topic because there is more than one sub-unit of data that is going to be analyzed for the case study.

The primary goal of this research was to discover successful strategies used by educators to motivate students, so that the data may uncover strategies that would help improve students’ literacy skills and scores.

Participants

The participants of this case were elementary and special education teachers across the fourth grade at Jane Doe Elementary School, located in Effingham County, Georgia. On a typical grade-level team, there are six to eight teachers. In this study, 4 teachers were participants. These teachers usually work in conjunction with an academic coach and administrators that serve as curriculum coordinators. For this study, two general education teachers, and two special education teachers participated in the study.

Data Collection and Analysis

The single case in this study was at Jane Doe Elementary School located in Effingham County, Georgia. The case involved several stages of research. During the first state, I collected interviews with general education and special education teachers, separated into two separate focus groups (Appendix A). The classrooms of the teachers of the focus group was setting for the direct observations in the first step of developing the case. By using the direct observations of the teachers, it enabled me to see if teacher are following strategies for motivating students that are recommended by current literature. By interviewing these teachers, the researcher gained an understanding on what teachers implement in their classrooms to increase student motivation for reading. This was useful to me as a pre-service teacher, because one day, these methods might be needed with students in my own classroom. This was the first unit of analysis.

This information was supplemented by the second stage of research: The second stage of research involved me observing instruction to see if strategies that are recommended are being used to help improve and motivate students who struggle in the

area of reading. This investigation was conducted by observing in the classroom setting, and using an observation protocol (Appendix B). This will be the second unit of analysis.

At the conclusion of the focus groups, I compared and contrasted teacher responses to see if there is a baseline of similarity or what differences are found in the motivational practices teachers use with students who struggle with reading. Explanation-building will be the primary analytical technique to explore these practices. By using this technique, I was able to build an explanation of the case and identify links between the data. The researcher also compared the practices currently used in the individual classrooms with those recommended by experts in the field, of which I obtained from the literature review. Yin (2014) states that the challenge of this type of analytical technique is the tendency for researchers to drift their focus from their original topic to other ideas. However, I, in this case referred, to the purpose of the study in finding the connections between the data units in the case study, which allows me to remain focused on the topic of motivational techniques used by general education and special education teachers in P-5 settings and accomplish the purpose of the study

Participants

Over the course of this research project, I invited teachers of reading to speak with me about their reading instruction. I was able to interview four 4th grade teachers and complete three separate classroom observations during Reading instruction. Of the four teachers that were interviewed, two of those teachers were general education teachers, and the other two were special education teachers.

Table 1. PARTICIPANTS

Teacher Name	Age	Years of Teaching Experience	General or Special Education
Rosa	25-30	5-10	General Education
Sally	35-40	20-25	General Education
Laura	25-30	5-10	Special Education
Emily	35-40	20-25	Special Education

Data Analysis

When conducting a qualitative study you must discuss details in your data collection methods. You must state if you are audio or video taping the interview. For analysis procedures you must transcribe the recordings, conduct several readings of each transcript, create codes for the transcripts, input codes and see what patterns emerge from the data. These patterns (or similarities in discussions from the participants) will formulate the themes you will describe as part of your findings.

During analysis, I looked for information and connections in the data to answer the research questions: “How do teachers motivate students who struggle with reading?” and “How do these methods of motivation overlap between general education and special education classes, if there is any overlap?”

To begin my analysis, I transcribed my interviews. Then, I was able to look through the transcription, as well as the notes I took during the observation of reading instruction in the classroom. While looking through this data, my goal was to identify strategies and techniques used by the teachers to motivate their students to engage in

reading. After I narrowed down what strategies the teachers were using, I compared these strategies to the best practices that were recommended by other researchers to motivate students to read. To finish the analysis, I then compared the findings of what the special education teachers were doing to motivate students to read to what the general education teachers were doing.

Findings

To begin, I focused on the responses and my observations of Rosa and Sally, who are both general education teachers. Rosa shared some techniques that she uses to motivate students to read. These included sharing books that she had found interesting, as well as holding a book club during lunch to get students motivated to read other books besides the texts that they are required to read. Rosa also used rewards such as personal treats, teacher coupons, and other items for students who achieve their set reading goals. Sally also used treats to reward students who were doing well on goals and/or AR tests. Both teachers followed the curriculum and pacing guide set by the Georgia Department of Education for instruction of reading, but there was no formal program used for reading instruction. Students were allowed to choose their own reading within their individual ranges, as determined by their lexile levels. Both teachers think that the Accelerated Reader goals help students have reading goals that are more individualized, as well as give students a variety of books that they can use to suit their interests. Both teachers also use novels in reading instruction by planning book units with novels, and read them together. Rosa likes this approach because it allows for more in-depth reading, and allows

the students time to invest their interests. Students increase their engagement, which motivates them to stick with the novels and read more. The challenges seen by both teachers mainly involved time and standardized testing. Rosa feels that the standardized tests are so difficult because they are on-grade level, and it is difficult to catch students up when trying to prepare them to read for those tests. Rosa also expressed that the standardized tests was only a number that did not express the work of the students and teachers. I also observed the use of praise of students, whether it was a personal goal, or just students volunteering to read out-loud to the class. Another instructional technique that I observed during reading instruction was guided reading in small group instruction, where the teacher worked with the students, and read the material with the. This task was student-centered, but the teacher provided support that was differentiated based on the academic ability of the students. In one of the general education classes, one particular observation of interest was that one student used a Google Chromebook to listen to her AR book, while following along with the paper copy of the book in her hand. This allowed her to have a physical engagement, which having someone read to her.

Laura and Emily were both special education teachers. Laura teaches in a self-contained setting serving students with disabilities in grades 3 through 5. Emily teaches in a resource classroom for just fourth graders. Their methods were similar in some areas to their general education counterparts, but there were also some differences. In terms of strategies, Laura had a different approach to reading instruction. She tries to ensure that there is a theme for every week, and that the reading selections match that theme to encourage student interest. Also, there are some non-readers in the class, so read-alouds are a common instructional method used for grabbing student interest to read, and giving

them motivation by connecting to the theme of the week. Because of the variety of readers in the self-contained classrooms, there are daily checklists, and sight words used with the students to increase reading fluency. Laura also stated that the most important concept to help motivate students was to build their confidence. She praises any progress, and makes a big deal of small milestones with the students. As the students in Laura's class take the Georgia Alternate Assessment rather than the GMAS assessment, there is no reading curriculum used. She allows students to pick their own books, as well as reward their small goals with an Accelerated Reader party. Emily uses frequent read-alouds with pictures books to motivate students, but expressed that many become frustrated with books that feature many words, as they believe their skill is not enough to read them. Emily also uses a visual tracking system so that students can chart their progress towards their goals, and hold themselves accountable. The students also receive treats for high scores, which has increased their participation during reading instruction. During my observation, I noticed that the students were using many different close reading skills during a read-aloud to make predictions, analyze context clues, as well as answer comprehension questions. Each student was praised for their participation. In one class, the students who participated during Independent Reading time, and met their goal of passing two Accelerated Reader tests got to get a bag of hot chips, and their picture taken were posted outside in the hallway. Teacher 4 also uses a Reading First box as an intervention tool, which is a guided reading program, as well as word study, to develop student confidence in vocabulary, which helps their fluency and motivation to continue to read.

Between all four teachers, there were some similarities and differences in their efforts to motivate students to read. They all allowed students to independently choose their Accelerated Reader books, and there were rewards and incentives for completing goals within the classroom, which were methods recommended by research to motivate students. Praise was also frequently used, which helps develop student confidence within their own reading abilities. The goals of every student are differentiated based on student ability. The special education teachers differentiated their instruction not only on curriculum, but also by completing frequent read-aloud with books. The general education teachers did novel studies, but these were not as frequent as the daily read-alouds that were used by the special education teachers, which kept students engaged, especially when attached to a theme. The use of praise was also specifically mentioned across the interviews, all teachers also expressed a passion for reading, which was passed to some students who also were top readers, and helped engage those students who were not as passionate. The teacher also shared that some students had an increase in motivation when offered an incentive or were given constant praise, but there were some students who did not respond to the incentives or praise to gain motivation to read.

There were themes I identified that were present across the interviews and observations. That answered the first research question: Are teachers using strategies that are recommended by research to help students who are struggling with reading? I was able to see these strategies during my observations in each teacher's classroom. I observed that Guided Reading was used in Laura, Emily, and Rosa's classrooms in varying formats (i.e. small groups and large groups). Rosa said that she used Guided Reading as "an intervention method that could be differentiated to meet the needs of her

students.” Another theme I identified was leveled reading. In each classroom, students were assessed on their lexile levels, and had books that meet their skill in reading. In her interview, Laura said, “I try to select fun and engaging books to read with my class. I also use reading a-z for leveled readers.” I was also able to observe Laura using a leveled reader in a small group instructional setting. A third theme that was identified through the analysis was choosing books that the students were interested in. Both Rosa and Emily used novels that engaged students, while Laura liked to choose a “theme” for each week that the students focused on reading about. This strategy was highly recommended by current literature as an excellent way to increase student engagement.

There were also several themes to answer the second research question, what are teachers doing to motivate students to read? The first theme was praise. This mentioned in the interviews. An example of this is seen in a response from Sally: “I give them verbal praise, “Oh, that's a big book you finished.” “Oh. Wow, you made 100 on it. Good job.” “Oh, it was nine points. Wow, look at you.” Another theme that was seen during the observations was the use of incentives to help students achieve their reading goals. I saw that students were individually rewarded with candy, as well as seeing the use of verbal praise when they got to move their marker on the physical tracking system. In terms of incentives, Rosa said that, “I use incentives for students reading progress. Students are able to get teacher coupons, treats, and other items for making growth.” This was observed through Rosa’s Hot Chips challenge, where a student can earn a bag of hot chips, as well as their picture put on the “Wall of Flame” for meeting a goal. I also observed Emily’s students move their trackers to show their percentage of their goal that had been met, and a student received candy for meeting a certain level. It was clear that

praise and incentives were very popular in motivating students to read, and the students were able to see how enthusiastic their teachers were about reading through the praise.

Conclusion

After the conclusion of this research, I have discovered that many teachers instruct reading using many of the recommended strategies for motivating students to read. One of the most important strategies that were used in motivating the students was teacher enthusiasm. When the teachers are enthusiastic about praising their students and maintaining a positive attitude toward reading and instruction, there is a positive impact on how students respond to instruction in terms of attitude, enthusiasm, and attention (Bettencourt, Gillet, Gall, and Hull, 1983). The praise and incentives used were different based on the teacher, and through my conversations with them, we were able to facilitate these methods, so that more students could be reached and motivated to read. Overall, I believe that the facilitation of resources between general education and special education teachers is vital. This type of success, where teachers share their experiences and knowledge benefits not only the teacher in development of teaching practices, but also carries over to the students through their successes in the classroom. . The amount of students that could be reached and motivated to reach could increase, and have an impact that lasts longer than the time that students are within the walls of the classroom.

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Appendix A

Sample Teacher Interview Questions

1. How do you motivate students to read in your class?
2. Do you offer incentives in your classroom for achieving reading goals? What are they?
3. Are students allowed to choose their own reading selections? If not, why?
4. How many students do you have that you would say were struggling in reading? What criterion do you use to judge this?
5. Do you have a required curriculum that you must teach from for reading? If not, what do you use? If so, would you say that your students enjoy it?
6. What is your personal opinion on reading?
7. What challenges do you face in motivating students to read in your classroom?

Appendix B- Observation Protocol Example

Strategy	Observed in Classroom (Y/N)	Notes
Letting Students choose their own reading material		
Using incentives for reading		
Rewarding students individually		
Giving students compliments for their reading		
Using a scripted program for reading instruction		
Do students read out-loud or to others?		